

Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley Day 3 Draft Availability **Saturday, April 30, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.**

On the selection of RB Isaiah Spiller:

“We did a lot of work on the backs in this class and we felt like Isaiah is a really good fit for what we were looking for in a back in this draft. He’s a very complete runner. I think that playing in [Texas A&M Head Coach] Jimbo Fisher’s offense, that offense really requires a lot of you. It’s a very easy transition, I think, to the pro game because it’s very much a pro-style offense. He has really good size for the position. He’s a six-footer, almost 220 [pounds]. He’s started since his freshman year in the No. 1 league in the country [Southeastern Conference]. He’s a three-time All-SEC player. I think that he can really see the game. I think that he has really good instincts. You can take a look at the data of making people miss — forced missed tackles, which we take a real close look at. Just felt like he was a really productive player coming from an elite program. You’re really seeing him have to navigate some NFL-type runs against NFL-type fronts, being in the SEC West. We’re really excited to add him to the group. I think that it’s going to create great competition in that room. I was really excited to be able to pick him.”

On Spiller’s ability in the passing game:

“In Jimbo’s offense, not only the protection side of it — he’s an excellent pass protector. Mentally, he was responsible for a lot there. He was a three-down back. I think that’s what Jimbo would tell you. He never left the field. Then, from a pass-catching standpoint, there was a lot of production in the passing game. From the workouts, you got to see him run a lot of different types of routes that you would see him run in the NFL. A very smooth, natural pass-catcher. Soft hands. I think this is a complete back. We’re excited to add him to this group and allow him to compete.”

On DL Otito Ogbornia:

“He was a really exciting evaluation. Just from a pure size standpoint, that’s really what we’re looking for. He’s six-foot-four, 325 [pounds]. Has 10-inch hands, 34.5-inch arms. He’s a real power player at the point of attack. We did a lot of work on this guy. He had an outstanding Senior Bowl. I think that if you take a look at his Senior Bowl, there were a lot of really competitive reps versus [G] Zion [Johnson] and [Patriots OL] Cole Strange, and a bunch of good players at that all-star game. I thought that he had an outstanding all-star game. Then, just from his game tape, I think that for a big man, you can really see this guy run and chase the football. If you go take a look at the LSU game, the Oregon game, stuff that’s on the perimeter, for a guy his size, what stood out to us is that he’s a guy that can really chase the football, too. Then, at the [local] pro day, [Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line] Jay Rodgers and [Defensive Assistant] Johnny Timu worked him out and put him through our type of workout. He really aced that part of the process. I think that was a really big factor in us really solidifying our feeling for him, just seeing him live at our local pro day, where we were able to spend some time with him. Just excited about where he can go with his game because he’s at the beginning, but he’s what we’re looking for inside. We’re excited to get him in that room with [DL] Sebastian [Joseph-Day] and [DL] Austin [Johnson], two guys that have really established themselves in this league. A guy he can really learn from is [DL] Christian Covington, is a pro’s pro. Get him in there with [DL] Jerry [Tillery] and create some competition. I think that was a really good pick for us.”

On his level of comfort with the interior defensive line:

"I think that we look at lot closer to what I expect to look like. We're not there yet, but we're a lot closer. I think that the additions in free agency were really big because those two guys are outstanding interior NFL players with real experience. Then, you add in the fact that Christian [Covington] and Jerry [Tillery] have both played in our defense. Then, you have young guys — [DL] Breiden Fehoko, [DL Joe] Graziano, [DL] Andrew Brown coming back, those guys all played for us last year and they've come back a lot bigger, stronger. They know how we expect to play now. Otito [Ogbonnia], from a stylistic standpoint, he probably wasn't a fit for everybody in the draft, but he was a really good fit for us. We did a lot of quality research on him and I think that he's going to fit right in. It's always a difficult transition inside in the NFL, no matter what side of the ball that you're on, but we're excited to get him in here and see what he can do."

On the selection of OL Jamaree Salyer:

"Super excited about this guy. We held this guy in really high regard. He was at the University of Georgia, a National Champion. Beyond that, where he played for them, he started for two years at tackle and inside. You were able to see him against the best in the country. The way he played against Michigan [in the College Football Playoff], against those two rushers that were both first-round-caliber rushers — certainly, [Lions DE Aidan] Hutchinson, the second pick in the draft, and [Ravens DE David] Ojabo, he would have been a top-20 pick, or something like that. You were able to see him operate. Just in that league alone, I think that it was a really pure evaluation. He has size. He has real toughness. Heavy hands. He's really smart. I have a great relationship with [Georgia Head Coach] Kirby Smart and that group of coaches — so much respect for them — and that's what we're looking for, we're looking to join up with guys that have been champions in really, really tough environments. He's blocked like 10 first-rounders his whole career, so every day in practice, you're able to get a full measure of where you stand. I think that it was an outstanding pick for us. Great value. He just adds to the depth of our front. I'm really excited about how our O-line looks right now."

On the potential of Salyer playing right tackle:

"Probably not to start out with, but just the fact that he has played there, I think that is a winning edge. He also snapped at the Senior Bowl, and I think that is a characteristic of a lot of the guys that we have taken. We've been able to see that flex. You know how it goes in the season, you normally keep eight [offensive linemen] on gameday and you need that flexibility. We've seen him block a lot of good players in a lot of different positions. That was a big part of the evaluation for us. We're excited about him."

On the selections of CB Ja'Sir Taylor and DB Deane Leonard:

"Ja'Sir Taylor was a guy that, from a defensive perspective and a kicking game perspective, we just felt like we really knew the guy. I think [Area Scout] James McPherson, our area scout who is a former Demon Deacon quarterback, we were able to get some inside knowledge on him. He was here on a 30 visit. He also had a private workout. Just felt like we knew a lot about him. He's a two-time captain there. He also was a kickoff returner. He had a kickoff returned for a touchdown this year versus Old Dominion. I just think that you're getting a DB with good dimensions. He's five-foot-11, 190 [pounds]. 4.4 [40-yard dash]. 37-inch vertical [jump]. Ball skills. He's played inside and outside for Wake [Forest]. Just feel like he's a DB, a guy that we'd like to join up with. We'll see where it goes. [Special Teams Coordinator] Ryan Ficken and [Assistant Special Teams Coach] Chris Gould, also, did a lot of work on him from a special teams standpoint as a returner in the core unit. I think that he will give us some good depth there. Then, we were able to get Deane Leonard from Ole Miss at the end there. We did a lot of work on the end of this draft because we had so many picks in the last two rounds. We did a ton of work. In the secondary, there were guys that you can find there late if you do the work. [Defensive Coordinator] Renaldo Hill, [Secondary Coach] Derrick Ansley, [Assistant Secondary Coach] Tommy Donatell, our scouts, we just did a ton of work on the back end of the draft. Deane had a lot of good things to join up with. He started out in Canada at [the University of] Calgary and played really, really well there, and then transferred to Ole Miss. You're getting to see him against the best in the country each and every week. He's six-foot, 190 [pounds]. Ran a really low 4.4 [40-yard dash]. He's smooth in transition. He did play some inside. Really good in run support. Probably similar to [DB] Mark Webb [Jr.] last year, just has a lot of traits that we feel like really translate to the National Football League. We'll see where it goes."

On the selection FB Zander Horvath:

“We were able to get him at the end. He’s a really intriguing prospect. He’s a guy that has a lot of versatility; running the football, catching the football, blocking, special teams, he has a pro body and we’re just going to figure it out. I think starting him out at fullback and giving us a real look in a two-back role, but then, as a core special teams guy, just in that mold. This guy did a lot for Purdue. You were able to see him in a lot of different roles for those guys. [Purdue Head Coach] Jeff Brohm does a great job coaching on offense. You were also able to see this guy in the kicking game and he worked out really well. So, just excited to see where it goes with him, but really a quality player.”

On if there are any position groups he’d like to still address:

“We have some guys working right now in the undrafted free agent role with the rookie class. I think what we’re trying to do with the positions that you feel like can help your team out, just trying to onboard some guys that you feel like can compete and possibly earn a roster spot. I think we’re selectively kind of going through that right now. Like I said, we did so much work on the back half of the draft, I think we’re going to probably be able to join up with some good players. Last year, we had several undrafted guys end up making it for us and being a part of our team, whether it was the active roster, practice squad. I’m excited to see how this shakes out. It’s still going on right now. Then, after the draft, there’s still a veteran market right now. A lot of the veteran guys were kind of staying patient, waiting until after the draft to see how these rosters take shape, so now there will be another wave here in the springtime of veteran free agency. We’ll see where that goes, too.”

On the depth at the EDGE/outside linebacker:

“We went into the draft and if that was a part of the equation, then we would’ve selected a rusher, it just didn’t quite work out that way. So, to kind of fill out the depth of that position, we’re going to have to look elsewhere. The second phase, whether it’s the undrafted free agency right now or veteran free agency or before the first game — sometime during training camp — that’ll probably happen at one of those three junctures.”

On the wide receiver group:

“We really like our receiving corps. I know I sure do. I think that we have one of the top receiving corps in the NFL. Going into the draft, we stacked that position heavily. We definitely did all of the work on it, but we were definitely going to take the best player approaching this draft and it just didn’t work out that way. I think the flexibility that we have with the group that we have when you have guys like [WR] Keenan [Allen] and [WR] Mike [Williams] leading the way, two of the premium receivers in the league and then, last year, I think we saw how special [WR] Josh Palmer can be and [WR] Jalen Guyton has been a quality player here for two years now and he’s getting better coming back, we were able to onboard [WR] DeAndre Carter, who’s played receiver in this league, on top of being a returner. He’s actually played receiver at a high level. We’ll see where that goes at that position here in undrafted free agency and then see if we join up with someone later on. In our skill position players — receivers, tight ends, backs — I think we have a pretty complete unit right now.”

On if he heard from any of the current players about the draft class:

“Yeah, I got [S] Derwin James [Jr.]. He played for [Texas A&M Head Coach] Jimbo Fisher at Florida State, so he signed off on Isaiah Spiller in a big way. Derwin had to go play against that offense every single day, so he was saying, ‘You know that if you can play all three downs for Jimbo that you’re a legit guy.’ So, I got something from Derwin that way. The Georgia guys, I was talking to [Georgia Head Coach] Kirby Smart. I spoke at Georgia’s clinic in the springtime and I think that relationship has gone a long way. I was really picking [OL] Jamaree [Salyer] in this draft. I felt like I knew a lot about him, just going to talk with Kirby and then going through this draft process. I think we have a lot of Georgia guys on our team and that’s a good sign because they’re the best team in the country right now. So, the fact that you can get [TE] Tre’ [McKitty] and [DB] Mark [Webb Jr.] in last year’s class, we get Jamaree in this year’s class, I like that because that league is the best league in the country. There’s a reason why more people are drafted in that league than any other — these guys have been through the fire. I was able to talk to the Georgia guys, Mark and Tre’, about Jamaree, too.”

On how the roster has improved:

“Well, I think from the last game we played to now, we’re certainly a much different looking football team. We haven’t gone out there on the field yet, but it’s getting there, for sure. I think [General Manager] Tom Telesco and [Director of Player Personnel] JoJo Wooden, [Director of College Scouting] Kevin Kelly, our scouts deserve so much credit for all the work that we’ve done this offseason from the draft process and then [Owner and Chairman of the Board] Dean and [President of Football Operations] John Spanos leading the way, starting with the trades all the way to free agency to now, it’s been a team effort. I think that today was a culmination of all that hard work. It never ends in the NFL. Today was an ending, tomorrow is a beginning. There’s going to be more work to do onboarding players and there is a lot of time between now and our first game. There’s a long time between now and when we play. So, we’re always going to be trying to find that winning edge. I really like the team that we have in front of us right now and Monday, when we’ll be in meetings, it’s going to be exciting to see that group in person.”

On the depth at cornerback:

“I’m glad that we were able to draft a couple of guys because I feel like those guys really give us quality depth. I think the way we look at corner, we’re bringing back [CB] Asante [Samuel Jr.], TC [CB Tevaughn Campbell], Vato [CB Michael Davis] and then you onboard [CB] J.C. [Jackson], you have a good group coming back. We have Keman Hall coming back, who we have a really high opinion of. You get these two guys in the draft. Then, you have to remember with the way our safety group is, a lot of those guys have slot characteristics. So, you’re picking up almost extra corners with a Mark Webb, with a Derwin James with [S] Nas Adderley with a [S] JT Woods — you’re picking up slot flexibility. Again, I feel really good about where our DB group is at. I’m excited to see those guys compete, kind of build off that group that we had last year. I know that they’re going to play a lot better. Last year, we ended up playing a ton of corners because everybody was going down with injuries, but when our main guys were out there, we were tough to play against, so we’re excited to see that group come back. I liked what we did in the draft, so we’ll see how it goes.”

On if his looks for ball hawks and speed in a defensive back:

“In the secondary, you’re really looking for guys who can play man-to-man. It’s different, whether you’re playing corner or safety, but guys who can play man-to-man, guys who can play the ball in the deep part of the field and guys who are open-field tacklers. Then, we’re looking for that position flexibility if you can get it because that makes you a much more diverse secondary group. I think that the theme with all of these guys that we drafted in the last two years and that we’ve acquired in free agency is they can get the ball because that’s where it is in the NFL. You have to be able to take the ball away and the more guys that you can onboard that have ball skills, you increase your odds. We’re excited to work with this group and, hopefully, we’ll add a couple of guys in undrafted free agency that can help us, too.”